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TIN

1. HISTORY

New South Wales

The probable occurrence of tin in New South Wales was first referred to by the Rev. W. B. Clarke as early as 1849, while the same author notes having obtained a specimen in the Kosciusko district in 1861 and in the New England district in 1863. He also reported the discovery of stanniferous deposits at different localities in the Darling Downs, Queensland. In 1872 the Messrs. Fearby discovered tinstone near Inverell, and the present Elesmore mine was opened near the spot. The news of the discovery of tin in the New England district attracted a mild rush, and in March, 1872, valuable deposits of stream tin were found at Vegetable Creek. It is interesting to note that native tin, which is extremely rare, was discovered at Oban in this district. At Cope's Creek stanniferous gravels occur in the channel of the stream and in the slopes adjacent to it. Post-tertiary deposits of tin-bearing ore have been found at Emmaville, where mining was commenced soon after the opening of the district. In the southern portion of the State deposits have been discovered at Dora Dora, near Albury, and Pulletop, near Wagga, in the central-western district at Burra Burra, near Parkes, and in the far west at Poolamacca and Euriowie. The bulk of the yield, however still comes from the Tingha-Inverell district, the production last year being £117,600, out of a total for the whole State of £205,447. Of the total production in 1908 £129,952, or 60 per cent., represents the value obtained by dredging. During the year the Sydney smelting Company at Woolwich dealt with 1500 tons of ore obtained from the tin-fields of the State, the value of the product being estimated at £135,460.

Victoria

In Victoria lode tin has been discovered at Mt. Wills, Beechworth, Eldorado, Chiltern, Stanley, and other places in the north-eastern district; and stream tin has been found in a large number of places, including those just mentioned in the north-eastern district. The bulk of the production last year was obtained by dredging and hydraulic sluicing, the chief yields being 39 tons of ore, valued at £3289, raised in the Beechworth district, and 23 tons, valued at £1555, raised at Toora.

Queensland

The first notable discovery of the metal in Queensland occurred in 1872, when rich deposits of stream tin were found in the country to the south of Warwick and on the borders of New South Wales. This district proved to be surprisingly rich, the value of the metal raised there during the

five years subsequent to its discovery being £715,000. The alluvial deposits, however, soon became exhausted, so far as the ordinary miner is concerned, but some degree of success has attended dredging operations in the district. In 1879 important discoveries were made in the Herbert River district, and the rich Herberton, Walsh, and Tinaroo mineral fields were opened up, further discoveries being shortly after reported on the Russell, Mulgrave, Jordan, and Johnstone. At the Annan River tinfield, near Cooktown, alluvial mining has been carried on continuously since 1886. The production in 1908 amounted to 4825 tons, valued at £342,191, more than three-fourths of which were produced by the Herberton mineral field.

Northern Territory

Valuable lodes of tin are found in the Northern Territory at Mount Wells, West Arm and Bynoe Harbour, and at Horseshoe Creek, south of Pine Creek, but the deposits have not yet been exploited to the extent they deserve. In 1908 there were 304 miners engaged in tin mining in the Northern Territory and the quantity of tin ores and concentrates exported was 447 tons, the highest yet recorded. This increase was entirely due to the progress at the Mount Wells mine, where, it is stated, there are enormous bodies of payable material awaiting development. The metal has also been discovered near Earea Dam in the province proper.

Western Australia

Tin was first discovered in Western Australia in the year 1888. and since that date has been found in several widely distant localities in the State - at the head of the Bow and Lennard Rivers, in the Kimberley district; on the Thomas River Gascoyne goldfield; at Brockman's Soak and the Western Shaw, in the Pilbara district; and at Greenbushes, in the south-western portion of the State. The production of tin ore and ingot for the State during 1908 amounted to 1093 tons, valued at £83,296, to which the Greenbushes field contributed 576 tons, valued at £41,046, and Pilbara 403 tons, valued at £30,636. Lode tin has been discovered at Wodgina, in the Pilbara field, and the deposits are being developed.

Tasmania

Tin mining in Tasmania dates from the year 1871, when the celebrated Mount Bischoff mine was discovered by Mr. James Smith. This mine, which is probably the richest in existence, is worked as an open quarry, and a large proportion of the original hill has been removed in the course of develop operations. Soon after which deposits were located in the north-east district by Mr. G. B. Bell, while deposits of stream tin were discovered near St. Helens by Messrs. Wintle and Hunt. Further finds were reported from Flinders and Cape Barren Islands, and in 1875 the metal was discovered at Mount Heemskirk. The total production of Tasmania in 1908 was 4621 tons of Ore, valued at £421,580, the largest producer being the Briseis Tin Mines Limited, in the North-east division, with a return of 1047 tons. this his company distributed during the year £60,000 in dividends. The Mount Bischcoff mine paid dividends amounting to £36,000, making a total to the end of 1908 of £2,160,000. Good returns are being obtained at the North-East Dundas and at Mount Heemskirk, and a fair amount of alluvial is furnished by the Eastern mining division. Other mines in the Western division are being prospected, and it is stated that some very rich deposits have been discovered.

2. VALUE OF TIN PRODUCED

The development of tin mining is, of course, largely dependent on the price realised for the metal, and, as in the case of copper, the production has been subjected to somewhat violent fluctuations. The table below shews the production in each of the Commonwealth States during the years 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1904 to 1908:

TIN PRODUCED IN AUSTRALIA, 1881 to 1908.

State.			1881	1891	1901	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
QUANTITY.										
			Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
New South Wales	}	Ingots	5,824	1,454	648	1,074	1,170	1,161	1,331	954
		Ore	609	203	11	626	786	510	583	841
Victoria	...	Ore	+	+	77	71	124	106	104	79
Queensland	...	Ore	+	+	1,661	3,923	3,945	4,823	5,140	4,885
			+	+						
			+	+						
South Australia	...	Ore	...	+	81	300	295	398	436	441
West Australia	...	Black	...	+	734	855	1,079	1,495	1,502†	1,093†
Tasmania	...	tin	+	+	1,790	2,172	3,892	4,473	4,343	4,521
		Ore	+	+						
				+						
				+						
Commonwealth	{	Ingots	+	+	5,002	9,021	11,291	12,966	13,439	12,814
		Ore,	+	+						
		ect.								
VALUE.										
			£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales}	Ingots		531,303	124,320	76,080	138,881	163,595	205,373	229,607	126,292
	Ore		37,492	9,643	464	49,496	62,515	50,371	63,698	79,155
Victoria	...	Ore	7,334	5,092	4181	5,190	11,159	11,644	10,531	6,070
Queensland	...	Ore	193,699	116,387	93,723	270,276	297,454	490,283	496,766	341,566
South Australia	...	Ore	...	1,938	5,586	24,179	23,768	36,907	41,365	35,876
West Australia	...	Black	...	10,200	40,000	58,817	86,840	157,644	166,139	83,595
Tasmania	...	tin	375,775	293,170	212,542	255,228	362,670	557,266	501,681	421,580
		Ore								
Commonwealth		...	1,145,603	560,750	432,576	802,067	1,008,001	1,509,488	1,509,787	1,094,134

Dressed tin ore, about 70% tin. †Tin ingot and ore. ‡ Not available.

3. WORLD'S PRODUCTION OF TIN

According to "The Mineral Industry" the world's supplies of tin during each of the last five years were obtained as follows:-

THE WORLD'S TIN SUPPLIES, 1904 to 1908.

Origin.		1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.		1908.
		Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.		Tons.
English production	...	4,132	4,468	4,522	4,700		4,650
Chinese exports	4,482	4,052	4,000		4,000
Straits to Europe and America	...	57,419	56,840	57,143	52,520		60,463
Straits to India and China	...	3,261	1,484	1,292	3,140		2,190
Australia to Europe and America	...	4,846	5,028	6,482	6,612		5,921
Banka sales in Holland	...	11,363	9,960	9,286	11,264	}	13,900
Billiton sales in Java and Holland	...	3,215	2,715	1,968	2,229		
Bolivian arrivals on Continent	}						17,000
Bolivian arrivals in England		12,978	14,245	16,394	15,500		
Total (long tons)	...	97,214	99,222	101,139	99,965		108,124

The main users of tin are the manufacturers of tin-plates, while it is also required in conjunction with other metals to produce bronze, brass, Britannia metal, pewter, printers' type, and solder. It is stated that the rising tendency of prices during recent years is due to the fact that production has not been commensurate with the demands for consumption, and also in some measure to the fact that for industrial purposes the metal can be replaced by others to a limited extent only.

4. PRICES OF TIN

The average price of the metal in the London market for the year 1897 and from 1901 to 1908 was as follows:-

PRICE PER TON OF TIN, 1897 to 1908.

Year		Price per Ton.					Year		Price per Ton.		
1897	£	s.	d.			1905	£	s.	d.
1901	61	8	0			1906	143	1	8
1902	118	12	8			1907	180	12	11
1903	120	14	5			1908	172	12	9
1904	127	6	5					133	2	6
		126	14	8							

According to "The Mineral Industry" the maximum price obtained for tin during the period 1897-1908 was reached in December, 1906, when the metal was quoted at £195 19s. 9d. per ton.

5. EMPLOYMENT IN TIN MINING

The number of persons employed in tin mining during each of the years 1901 to 1908 is shewn below:-

PERSONS ENGAGED IN TIN MINING, 1901 to 1908.

Year.		N.S.W.	Victoria.	Qld.	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tas.	Cwlth.
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
1901	...	1,428	...	1,148	...	413	1,065	4,054
1902	...	1,288	...	1,467	...	249	1,260	4,264
1903	...	2,502	...	1,698	...	294	1,331	5,726
1904	...	1 2,745	50	2,237	...	284	1,304	6,620
1905	...	2,884	50	2,936	...	4 79	1,351	7,700
1906	...	3,795	95	2,872	558	890	1,659	9,311
1907	...	3,173	87	2,582	384	1,003	1,828	9,227
1908	...	2,456	53	2,140		614	1,828*	7,475†

* Figures for 1907; returns for 1908 not available. † Comprising Tasmanian returns for 1907.

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